



**MINUTES OF THE
Edina Transportation Commission**
Thursday, February 24, 2005
Edina City Hall
4801 West 50th Street
Community Room

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Fred Richards, Marie Thorpe, Jean White, Warren Plante, Joni Kelly Bennett, Les Wanninger, Dean Dovolis

MEMBERS ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT:

Steve Lillehaug, Sharon Allison

I. New Business

a. The cities of Edina and St. Louis Park met jointly with Mn/DOT regarding the expansion of TH 100 that was scheduled to begin 2006 and its impending delay to 2014.

Bennett moved that the ETC recommend to Council to adopt a formal resolution to push for higher priority funding for this project. Motion seconded by Plante. Motion was not voted on. Wanninger suggested that the ETC should indicate to the Council whether Highways 62 or 100 or both are priorities. Lillehaug recommended waiting until after March 16th to prioritize because Mn/DOT will be presenting their 2030 Plan at that time and currently, Highway 62 is not included in their plan. The consensus is to wait until after March 16th.

Dovolis moved that the I-494 Corridor Commission 'Elements for Responsible Transportation Funding' handout be brought to Council for adoption. Seconded by Bennett.

Ayes: 7

Nays: 0

Motion carried.

b. Community Center & Southview Gymnasium Traffic Study – Postponed until March 24, 2005.

c. Traffic Study for Proposed Redevelopment at West 50th Street & France Avenue, Haugland Company

In reference to the 50th and France redevelopment, Richards suggested three questions that he believes the Commissioners should answer when evaluating site redevelopment. He stated the questions are necessary to prevent them from duplicating the responsibilities of the Planning Commission. The questions are:

- i. Does the development significantly affect the operation and congestion of the adjacent roadways or intersections?

- ii. Does the development significantly affect pedestrian safety?
- iii. Does the development provide opportunities for enhanced transit usage, van-pooling or car-pooling?

Richards recommended that the ETC advise the Council on site redevelopment based on the "Purpose and Duties" set forth in the ETC ordinance. He stated that he met with the Mayor and staff regarding redevelopment and traffic issues and he suggested setting a minimum threshold requirement of when the ETC will address traffic issues as they relate to redevelopment. He also stated that he would stop Commissioners from discussing issues such as aesthetic, height, etc. since these are not within the parameters of the ETC.

He said the ETC's meeting schedule is a concern because the Planning Commission approved the redevelopment of 50th & France on February 23rd and is sending it on to Council for approval. He said meeting after the Planning Commission would not work well if the ETC is to provide feedback and suggested changing their meeting day to the third Tuesday of each month.

Some Commission members' felt that the redevelopment at 50th and France is a good opportunity to address the congestion in this area and try to find solutions to alleviate the problem. Bennett suggested another question: Can they significantly take advantage of the opportunity to address an existing problem? Richards said this might not work very well because the Planning Commission is a reactive body whereas the ETC is proactive. Dovolis said in his experience, he's been asked to push a building further back from the street to make room for a turn lane. Wanninger suggested adopting a policy that would allow the ETC to create plans for areas with traffic congestion in anticipation of redevelopment.

Richards said the developers are not anticipating an increase in traffic based on a traffic study that they conducted. Traffic should decrease because the Arby's Restaurant and two curb cuts are being eliminated and 45 off-street parking are being added.

Plante noted that when the Planning Commission reviewed the plans for the 70th Street redevelopment they did not consider how the new development would affect traffic, so he is pleased to see that the developers at 50th & France had a traffic study done.

Bennett asked if they were to do nothing now, when would they have another opportunity? Staff does not know because there are no plans to make changes and it would not be fair to hold up the developers. Dovolis suggested becoming proactive by staying ahead of redevelopment trends and like Wanninger, he suggested creating plans for areas where traffic is a concern. Bennett asked staff why wasn't there a plan in place considering the many years of traffic problems. Richards said this is a question for the ETC to answer and they just did not have time to get to this area because they spent a lot of time on other issues.

Thorpe said Council has not adopted the proposal so there is still time to have a traffic study done. Wanninger concurred and stated that if nothing is done now it may as well be removed from the list of problem areas. White stated that she is in favor of the plan as presented. Dovolis said he couldn't, in good conscience hold up the plan, because the developer did everything necessary.

Dovolis moved to approve the proposal. Seconded by White. Wanninger said he's in favor of this motion with restrictions such as eventually eliminating parking on France and adding turn lanes. Dovolis said he would not want these restrictions tied to his motion.

Thorpe said the reduction in trip generation is insignificant. Bennett stated that three months ago the ETC asked staff to look at this area because of rumored redevelopment plans and she is very disappointed that nothing was done.

Ayes: 4 (White, Dovolis, Plante, Richards)

Nays: 3 (Bennett, Wanninger, Thorpe) [It should be noted that these Commissioners are in favor of the proposed redevelopment, however, they believe that the City is missing an opportune time to make changes to address the traffic issues in the area.]

Motion carried.

Plante asked how long ago has Planning known about the redevelopment plans. Dovolis said he's known about it for at least one year. Wanninger said in order for the ETC to give input to the Planning Commission, the ETC will need to meet before them and the questions suggested by Richards should be posed to potential redevelopers. Richards said they should set a threshold and communicate this to the Planning Commission to get their feedback to avoid duplication. White asked if it would be appropriate to meet with the Planning Commission to understand how a proposal comes to fruition. Dovolis said it would be good to meet and discuss what each Commission is doing.

III. Old Business

a. Neighborhood Traffic Management Plan (NTMP) – Scoring and Ranking

West 56th Street – staff is recommending that this be postponed until Council has adopted the ETC policy. Staff explained that a stop sign was requested and the Traffic Safety Committee's recommendation to the Council was to deny the request because it did not meet warrant. The Council approved the installation on a six months trial basis and has directed the ETC to consider this issue for other traffic calming devices. Residents Perry and Mary Mead, of 80 Woodland Circle, said the stop sign was installed in their yard and the noise level has since increased. Richards said they would need to gather all the facts before making a recommendation to the Council. The Mead's will be notified when this is put back on the agenda.

Staff at ETC's directive, using the NTMP Scoring and Ranking process, ranked the following areas:

- Edina High School and Valley View Middle School Areas:
 - Gleason Road received a score of 805 and a rank of #1.
 - Valley View Road received a score of 733 and a rank of #1 (governed by Gleason).
 - (Both roads are classified as B-Minor Arterial State Aid Roadways.)
- Northwest Edina Area:
 - Parkwood Road received a score of 456 and a rank of #3.
 - View Lane/Schaefer Road received a score of 472 and a rank of #2.
 - (Both roads are classified as Local Roadways.)

Continuation of the NTMP process includes defining the study area and completing the Petition-to-Study. Staff recommended that the ETC initiate a Traffic Study for the High School and Valley View Middle School area and ask Council to amend the Capital Improvement Program to appropriate the funds for the improvement.

Dovolis said he saw the newsletter that was sent to residents in the Country Club Neighborhood regarding reconstructing the roadways and he asked if, as neighborhoods are being reconstructed, should they be put through the NTMP process to identify and resolve traffic issues at the same time? Lillehaug said the driving force behind the reconstruction in the Country Club Neighborhood is sanitary and watermain breaks and they do not want to put 2005 projects on hold for the NTMP process. Dovolis said it would be wise to coordinate future reconstruction projects with the NTMP process. Staff was asked to update the ETC on reconstruction plans at the next meeting.

IV. *Approval of Minutes*

The minutes of January 27, 2005 was approved as submitted. Motion made by Plante and seconded by Bennett.

Resident Maria Fesenmaier, 5713 Concord Avenue, addressed the ETC on behalf of her neighborhood association where she serves as the President. Ms. Fesenmaier said the Council referred them to the ETC with their traffic safety issues and concerns. Richards said he thought the Council did not want the ETC to handle these matters because Engineering would continue to respond to them. He said the ETC would clarify and get back to her.

Ms. Fesenmaier also inquired about the traffic study being conducted around the Edina Community Center and Southview Middle School. She was informed that the study would be available to the public upon completion, which is expected to be the middle of March. The ETC should have the study for their next scheduled meeting (3/24/05), followed by the Planning Commission and then on to the Council.

Ms. Fesenmaier stated that there is a lack of police enforcement of parking violations in this area. She said they've appealed to the Police Chief and the Planning Department for help but this has been to no avail. She asked whom should they be talking with? Wanninger said this might be one for the ETC to handle. She stated further that the area is plagued with traffic issues but the Council did not take this into consideration, their only focus was on building the gyms and not on the impact on the neighborhood. Richards recommended waiting until the traffic study is complete to comment.

For communication purposes, Ms. Fesenmaier recommended that the City consider putting notices in with utility bills as well as working with established neighborhood associations to inform residents and receive feedback. She also stated that she could not find the agenda for tonight's meeting and meeting minutes on the web.

Regarding the 50th & France development, Ms. Fesenmaier stated that it appears the Planning Department was not being proactive because they did not take steps to make sure a traffic study was done considering that they knew about the project for approximately one year. Richards said the Planning Department followed the established rules.

Mr. Ron Wenaas, 5617 Sherwood Avenue, noted the length of discussion that took place tonight regarding the 50th & France redevelopment and the possible need for a traffic study even before the project has begun, whereas the gyms are being built even before the traffic study is complete.

Meeting adjourned. The next meeting is scheduled for March 24, 2005, 6:00-8:00 p.m. in the Community Room, Edina City Hall.